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PROGRAM The Ten O'Clock News STATION WTTG-TV

DATE September 6, 1991 10:00 P.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Former CIA Official Clair George Indicted

RON GARDNER: Here in Washington, a federal grand jury has charged a former top official of the CIA with lying about his agency's role in the Iran-Contra scandal. Clair George is calling himself a pawn of political exploitation. And as Channel 5's Ron Talley reports, the indictment comes just one week before Senate hearings are scheduled on a new Director for the CIA.

RON TALLEY: Clair George, now retired from the CIA after 33 years, was the spy agency's Deputy Director of Operations during the sale of arms to Iran and the diversion of those profits to the Nicaraguan rebels. The grand jury indictment claims he knew about Oliver North's secret operation to arm the Contras and lied to both Congress and a grand jury about that, as well as the CIA's involvement.

CRAIG GILLEN [prosecutor]: The obstruction-of-justice counts apply to congressional hearings in the fall and winter of 1986, as well as to an obstruction of this grand jury. The false statements apply to statements made to congressional hearings in October and December of 1986. And there are perjury charges charging perjury in December of 1986, as well as in this grand jury.

TALLEY: From his Bethesda, Maryland home, George responded cautiously to the charges, leaving all legal questions to his attorney.

CLAIR GEORGE: My family and I see this as another in a host of crises which we have had to confront during my years with the CIA. We prevailed, however, because we knew we were always pursuing our nation's best interests.

This crisis, this indictment merely makes me a pawn in a continuous drama of political exploitation. My conscience in this situation, as in my 33 years of CIA service, is clear. In the end, I and my service to my country will be vindicated.

TALLEY: George, the CIA's number three man at the time, served right below Robert Gates, the President's controversial nominee to be CIA Director. The indictment comes at a bad time for Gates and the White House, a week before confirmation hearings, already delayed by charges of a CIA cover-up from another agency official who's been given immunity. Senators on the Intelligence Committee and sources within say they expect George will be called to testify in the Gates confirmation hearings. They also expect, however, that he'll plead the Fifth Amendment unless he's offered immunity. And that, we are told, is not likely to happen.

Gates has repeatedly said that while CIA officials above him and below him may have known about the Iran-Contra scandal, he did not.

As for George, if convicted on the ten grand jury charges, he faces up to 40 years in prison and over \$60,000 in fines.

In Washington, Ron Talley, Fox News.